



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on Palestine Training Needs Assessment Team Report**

As delivered by Political Counselor Bruce Connuck  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
January 27, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States expresses its thanks for the thorough and analytical report produced by the Training Needs Assessment Team that deployed to study the January 9 Palestinian presidential election.

We appreciate, in particular, the team's ability to organize and deploy on such short-notice.

The joint Secretariat-ODIHR team has done an excellent job fulfilling its mandate to explore what elections assistance the OSCE might be able to usefully provide to Palestinian parties in the future, specifically in conjunction with July parliamentary elections.

The team has made a number of worthwhile recommendations in its report that all participating States should study closely.

The United States supports these recommendations. Some could be acted on quickly and at little cost.

These include making OSCE materials on elections issues available to interested Palestinian parties and extending invitations to appropriate Palestinian groups to attend OSCE election-related events or to participate in OSCE election observation missions.

OSCE support for Palestinian civil society in the area of elections seems a particularly fruitful area to explore over the long-term.

The United States will look to explore with other interested delegations, the Secretariat and ODIHR how the OSCE can concretely follow-up on the training needs assessment team's recommendations.

The deployment of the OSCE team raises the larger issue of sharing OSCE elections expertise with neighboring regions.

This Organization has long ruminated over how to enhance its outreach effort. Providing assistance for elections in neighboring regions is one effective way of doing so.

By disseminating OSCE election commitments and standards and sharing ODIHR's unique expertise and experience, we encourage democratization and rule-of-law among OSCE neighbors, which enhances our collective security.

Moreover, showing responsiveness to our Partners and those seeking Partner status, such as the Palestinian Authority, is necessary to maintain the credibility of our outreach effort and requires that we be willing to expend real resources.

The United States notes that the idea for an OSCE role in the Palestinian presidential election originated with our Mediterranean Partners.

Once again, we thank the Secretariat-ODIHR team for providing us with concrete recommendations on how the OSCE might further assist the Palestinians ahead of parliamentary elections in July.

The entire international community, including the OSCE, must do all it can to support democratic elections in the Palestinian territories.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.